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ABSTRACT

The Texas Metro Network (TMN) is an informal group of Head Start Directors and Executive Directors organized for the purposes of improving the delivery of training and technical assistance and for assisting communication between large scale Head Start programs in the metropolitan areas of Texas. In pursuit of these aims, each member unit of the TMN selected an area of program management that it performed well and wrote a paper describing that area of program management. The papers describing the model program activities are provided in this handbook. The first paper describes the TMN in terms of differences and similarities among members and between metro and smaller, rural programs. Subsequent papers provide models for (1) an employee evaluation system, (2) program development for children with multiple handicaps, (3) networking within an information and referral system, (4) financial auditing, (5) administrative reorganization of out-of-compliance programs delegated to agencies, (6) managing information flow, and (7) parent participation. Cost and training factors associated with implementation were taken into consideration when model management areas were selected. In addition, models chosen were congruent with Head Start standards. (RH)

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Texas Head Start Metro Models

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THE TEXAS HEAD START METRO MODELS

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This is a publication developed by The Institute for Child and Family Studies at Texas Tech University. The mission of the Institute is to assist those who work for and with young children and their families through research, development, and training activities so that they may be more effective teachers, administrators, aides, parents, and supportive personnel.

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Institute for
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PREFACE

The Texas Metro Network came into being during the fall of 1981 at a meeting that took place at Texas Tech University. The Network is an informal group of Head Start Directors and Executive Directors from the state's largest programs, which are located at Austin, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston, San Antonio, and South Texas-Hidalgo County. The group was organized for the purpose of improving the delivery of training and technical assistance and, also, as a means of opening up communication channels amongst themselves. During their initial meeting, the Metro Network members shared common problems and concerns, and agreed that the Network could be an important vehicle to help them stay informed and abreast of happenings in Head Start. To maintain the interest of the group, they decided to undertake activities where all the members could participate and share in their development. The publication, THE TEXAS HEAD START METRO MODELS, is the first activity of the group.

During the planning for the publication, it was decided that each of the Metro programs would select an area that it considered itself to be strong in and that it could perform well. Among the considerations for the selection of their model, the individual programs were encouraged to look at the cost factor involved as well as the training that would have to be accomplished in order to implement the model. In addition, there was not be be any conflict between the activity and Head Start standards.

The publication is being disseminated to all Head Start programs in Texas with the hope that the "Models" presented here

The Metro Network received support in its endeavors from key personnel from the Region VI Administration for Children, Youth, and Families; namely Tommy Sullivan, Regional Director; Gerald Hastings, Director Head Start Division; and, Earl Richardson, Parent Program Specialist. Their encouragement of the Network and its activities was very gratifying. Others that assisted with logistics included the University Consortium staff; primarily Jeanette Rummel, Texas Southern University; Arnoldo Benavides, Pan American University; Bridget Allen, Phyllis Crawford, Irma Quesada, James Mitchell, Cindy Tolbert, Maidy Pirtle, and Dale Smith who assisted with the editing, all from the Institute for Child and Family Studies at Texas Tech University. Assistance in the development of Chapter VIII was provided by Jose Escalante, Viola Perez, and Robert Garate from the Community Action Council of South Texas-Hidalgo County.

The cover for the publication was designed by Jaroslav Osecky with assistance from Jerry Kelley, both from the University News and Publications Department at Texas Tech University.

Mary Tom Riley
Alfredo R. Flores

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The Texas Head Start Metro Models is a product of the Texas Metro Network. The Executive Directors and the Head Start Directors from the Metro programs, along with staff from the Institute for Child and Family Studies at Texas Tech University, made this publication a reality. While this book is a visible product which bears witness to the hard work that went into its development, it is difficult for the reader to internalize the spirit of cooperativeness, the desire to share with ones colleagues, as well as the enjoyment received by the members of the Metro Network as they worked on this project. The following persons made this publication possible:

Austin	James Strickland Sherry Chance
Dallas	Wanda Smith Kathy White
El Paso	Irving Gray Dolores Cox Cecilia Hermosillo
Fort Worth	John Widner
Houston	Ruth Marshall
San Antonio	Blanche Russ Adelina Fritz
South Texas- Hidalgo County	Rudy Zamora Arnoldo Cantu Adela Guerrero

may be of some help to them. While it may not be possible to implement them in total, it may be worthwhile to extract portions of them and, with some modification, be able to apply them to their local situation.

Mary Tom Riley
Alfredo R. Flores

THE TEXAS HEAD START METRO MODELS

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TEXAS HEAD START METRO NETWORK

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THE METRO NETWORK

Alfredo R. Flores
Research Administrator
Mary Tom Riley
Director
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Texas Tech University

The Texas Head Start Metro programs are evenly distributed geographically throughout the state. The North Texas area is represented by Dallas and Fort Worth, while the West Texas area has El Paso. South Texas has the South Texas and Hidalgo County program, while the Central Texas area is represented by San Antonio and Austin. The Coastal Bend area has the Houston program within its bounds. The common denominator that ties all of these Metro programs together is the fact that they each have over a quarter million people in their area and serve over 750 children in the full-year Head Start program. They enroll approximately 38% of all of the Head Start children in Texas.

METRO PROGRAM SIMILARITIES

There are many ways in which the Metro programs are alike. First of all, they have to meet or exceed the Head Start standards. They have to maintain a good quality program for their children and their families. In addition, they have the capability of conducting most of their own training and,

in most cases, they have a staff person responsible for carrying out this function. This is especially important for the Metro programs because of the large numbers of staff that they employ. Therefore, the need for a concentrated and coordinated effort for training is apparent. There is a constant staff turnover which makes training a reoccurring need and, therefore, a top priority.

METRO PROGRAM DIFFERENCES

Though Metro programs are similar in many respects, there are also many differences amongst them. One major difference is the type of program sponsor that administors the program; it can either be a Community Action Agency (CAA) or a Limited Purpose Agency (LPA). CAA's operate a variety of programs, of which Head Start may only be one. LPA's tend to focus on early childhood programs and, therefore, devote all of their energies to them. In certain instances, the operation of the program can be delegated either to public schools or community non-profit groups. Some sponsors may operate part of the program and may, also, delegate portions of it.

Another significant difference among the Metro programs is the management style of the sponsoring Executive Directors and the Head Start Directors. These styles differ as a result of the professional backgrounds of those administrators. Some come from Business, Teaching, Social Work, and some may be products of Head Start career development through progression and promotions in their programs. These differences are reflected in program operations and can be seen in the processes used in administration, such as personnel management or curriculum selection

and implementation. Though these stylistic differences are apparent, the outcome is the same in that they do operate quality programs for the children and their families.

METRO AND RURAL/MIDSIZE PROGRAM DIFFERENCES

It is a most difficult task to draw generalizations to describe program operations in Metro as opposed to rural/midsize programs because these generalizations do not always fit every situation. However, there are definite patterns that emerge from each type of program operation and it is important to look at what these are. This should provide us with a good basis for comparing programs so that we can observe what their needs are. The most obvious difference can be easily detected by looking at enrollment figures. Metro programs enroll a minimum of 750 children while rural/midsize programs may have as few as 30 children enrolled. The same can be said about staff since Metro programs may have over 200 staff while rural/midsize programs may have as few as six. It can easily be seen by looking at these enrollment and staff numbers that the logistics involved for programming for children as well as selecting, training, and evaluating staff demands a different approach for each of the program types mentioned.

Another difference between Metro and rural/midsize programs relates to the more formalized structure which is descriptive of Metro programs. The rationale for this stems from the fact that Metro programs

tend to have individual coordinators for each of the major components, such as Education, Social Services, Parent Involvement, Health and Handicap Services. Since these coordinators may have responsibility only for their individual components, they tend to develop more formal operating methods and procedures, which provides for closer guidance and structure. Rural/midsize programs, because of their size, may have a Head Start Director who is also the coordinator for the Education, Social Services, Health, Parent Involvement, and Handicap, as well as the other components. Some of these programs may have a person who is responsible for two or three components, at best. For this reason, rural/midsize programs tend to be more informal and less structured than the Metro programs.

The parents served by Metro programs differ to some degree from the rural/midsize group in regards to vocational orientation and this has implications particularly for the development of the parent involvement plan. The Metro parents are more oriented to work which is related to manufacturing or which is of a technical nature, while parents of rural/midsize programs are more likely to be associated with agricultural related work or light manufacturing. It should be understood, however, that the Head Start parents in both types of programs are more likely to work in the unskilled sector rather than the skilled. The point of all this is that the Metro parents tend to work in more stressful situations than the rural/midsize program parents, because of such factors as transportation, traffic, high crime rates, and other similar problems associated with living in these environments.

The number and the type of resources available to Texas Head Start programs is,

also, another major difference between the Metro programs and the rural/midsize programs. The Metro programs have recourse to many more resources than the rural/midsize programs and this is because most of the Social Service agencies are normally located in the metropolitan areas. The same is true of consultant specialists, such as medical doctors, dentists, psychologists, psychiatrists, educational diagnosticians, and other such professionals that Head Start has to rely on. While this may sound like Metro programs have an abundance of these resources available to them, in reality their problem is the process of securing those services. Most of these agencies and consultants have waiting lists that are incredibly long, and parents, as well as Head Start personnel, have problems securing appointments and keeping them because of transportation difficulties. The logistics involved in securing these services for children and their families is a puzzle that metro programs expend much of their energies trying to solve.

NEED FOR METRO NETWORK

As can be seen from these differences between the Metro and the rural/midsize programs, a need existed for the Texas Metro Network and that was the reason for its formation. The effort to get the Executive Directors and the Head Start Directors to discuss common concerns, to share with one another successful aspects of program operation, and to cooperate in designing and implementing joint ventures can only

result in a better managed local program.

The Texas Training and Technical Assistance program has profitted from the Metro Network. There has been much willingness on the part of the Metro programs to share their ideas and expertise with rural/midsize programs. This, in turn, has benefited the Metro programs by making training more relevant and responsive to their needs. This was the goal of the Network.

A MODEL EMPLOYEE EVALUATION SYSTEM

James Strickland
Executive Director
Child, Inc.

THE PROBLEM

Your throat is dry, your palms are wet, and Excedrin is about to become another abused drug. "THE MONITORS" have just cited a stuck commode float valve in one center, the lack of minutes for parent group meetings in another, and a teacher in a third center who swears she never heard of "lesson plans". The monitors want answers, they want them now, and they want them from you. After all, the Head Start director in Tinyburg always is "on top of things" and, with your large, sophisticated organization, you should be able to do at least as well. Right?

Right! But... how does a Head Start director with twenty-two centers and a home base program stay "on top of things"?

Obviously, the "things" you and the Head Start director from Tinyburg stay on top of will differ. You will not have personal knowledge of every stuck valve, parent meeting, and lesson plan. But monitors, validators, etc., spend much of their time with smaller programs and, if your monitor does not understand your management system, you are likely to be written off as just another high-paid, overrated boob that seldom even visits your own centers.

For years, large Head Start programs have held countless training sessions for their teachers, aides, center directors, and social workers drilling the importance of compliance with performance standards. For those same years, the directors of those large programs have had the dry mouth, wet palm, Excedrin experience associated with being found out of compliance.

Some of the well-trained staff just did not seem too concerned if maintenance reports, lesson plans, parent meeting minutes, etc., were left undocumented.

An informal survey of both large and small Head Start programs revealed that few job descriptions, and even fewer personnel evaluation forms, are "keyed" to the Head Start Performance Standards. Occassionally, there was some correlation in a general way, but few evaluations and no job descriptions were ever as explicit as the instruments used by program monitors.

The lack of correlation, however, did not seem to affect the efficiency of smaller programs, perhaps, because employees in such programs, have a chance to have more personal contact with the Head Start director. The explicit program requirements were passed along on an informal basis. What worried the Head Start director at a smaller agency, soon also worried the aide. But the aide at a larger agency seldom sees the director, and could not care less what his or her worries might be.

Ah ha! The solution is simple! Directors of large programs need only have as much "personal contact" with their staff as do directors of smaller programs. It would probably work... when donkeys fly and someone discovers the 48-hour day.

Although personal contact is an effective tool, the director of a program with two hundred employees cannot hope to have the same degree of personal contact as the director of a small program. Some method was needed to supplement what personal contact is possible; a method by which the employee, who seldom sees the Head Start director, can clearly understand how his or her job will help the program meet a specific set of performance standards; a method for translating the Head Start Performance Standards into job descriptions and personnel evaluations.

THE AUSTIN PLAN

Determining what was needed, however, was easy compared to getting it done.

Step one was to list each performance standard and decide precisely what tasks must be completed to ensure that each standard was met. Fortunately, much of that work had already been done in the "Guidance for Assessing Compliance" column of the original SAVI. However, even that had to be refined.

The resulting sixty-four page, single-spaced "refinement" listed (hopefully) every task and sub-task and sub-sub-task needed to (1) meet; (2) follow up on; and, (3) document every performance standard.

Once completed, this "task list" soon became the focus for all our agency's planning. It allowed tasks to be prioritized, assigned, coordinated, and scheduled with a clarity not possible before its development.

The list made it obvious that one person had to take responsibility for doing and documenting each task; that the task had to be followed up on by a second person; coordinated with two or three others; and all those substeps must be completed before some related task could begin.

However, while useful, the task list was not especially innovative (basically a "souped-up" SAVI). Also, it alone would not accomplish the original goal of "personalizing the performance standards".

Step two was to revise all job descriptions and to make sure that when all the "new improved" job descriptions were added together that they covered every item on the task list. If they did not, something was obviously not going to get done and a non-compliance would result.

The process was a case study in bureaucracies. The first reaction of our personnel was to disclaim responsibility for any task not previously assigned to them (the "it's not my job" approach). Later, when it became clear that funds were to be allocated on the basis of tasks, the cry became "She (or he) is trying to do my job". However, the results were job desriptions which matched the performance standards and personnel who knew exactly what piece of the performance standard puzzle they held.

However, getting everyone to properly place their piece of the puzzle was a different issue and the next major step.

Since job descriptions had, heretofore, been rather general and open to interpretation, almost every teacher, aide, social worker, and supervisor had a different (sometimes drastically different) idea about what was "satisfactory". Every year at evaluation and raise time,

we could anticipate a number of disagreements.

To overcome this problem and to ensure that the new job descriptions were not relegated to the same degree of obscurity as the old ones, we, also, revised the evaluations and instituted a monthly "follow-up" plan.

We based the "new evaluation forms" on the new job descriptions. Although we completed them annually as a part of the "follow-up plan", data for the new evaluations are supplied by the employee monthly.

Supervisors now verify this information on an on-going basis as one of their "follow-up" tasks. Missed or incomplete lesson plans, lack of volunteers in the classroom, or home visits left undone are now accounted for on a monthly basis and there are fewer surprises at evaluation and raise time.

THE ADVANTAGES

Once the monthly data began to come in, it also became evident that the performance standards-based system would also be useful in establishing the training plan and completing the agency's annual self-assessment.

Clarifying how all program activities tied back to the performance standards helped each activity fit with all others. Job descriptions, personnel evaluations, training plans, SAVI, career development plan, division plans, and budgets all became related to one another, no longer isolated tasks done solely for the purpose of

satisfying a requirement.

Topics for training began to focus on the items that the monthly data indicated needed the most work. The agency self-assessment process became simply a composite of the employees' monthly self-assessments. Many non-compliances can now be noticed and corrected before they become severe.

Also, the number of personnel complaints about evaluations diminished and those that remained were more clearly defined and related to program issues as opposed to personality differences. There were fewer charges of "She didn't give me a raise because she didn't like me". The disagreements that did remain generated some very useful and healthy questions such as, "What is a good lesson plan!"; "Who really is responsible for getting the volunteers into the classroom?"; and "What constitutes parent involvement in helping with lesson plans?"

As a result of one such question, it became obvious that staff, not even the Head Start director, could not be held totally responsible for meeting many fo the performance standards which relate to parents. Parents, themselves, would have to accept some of the responsibility. This realization resulted in a clearly defined job description for parents, a separate job description for Parent Policy Council representatives, and even more detailed job descriptions and evaluations for officers of the Parent Policy Council. As a result, parent involvement at all levels increased and there is less friction between staff and members of the P.P.C. Each has a clearly defined job and usually sticks to it.

THE DIFFICULTIES

One of the first problems encountered was the sheer magnitude of the work and money required if all performance standards were to be met equally well. We had to prioritize the tasks, completing those first that were most important or were prerequisites for others.

Also, the job of just keeping records on the individual employee's performance required a great deal of prioritizing. It was not practical to keep special records on every task because some were self-recording, and the work on some served as reliable "indicators" of the work done on others.

As a result of prioritizing, the number of items recorded monthly by each teacher was reduced to twelve or thirteen. The actual items vary, depending on a particular area the program wishes to emphasize or a weakness that needs correction. In Austin, we had a particular problem with lack of home visits. Just by keeping track of the number of home visits each teacher was doing, we increased visitations by 400%.

Home visits were a particular problem because they were, also, the focus of another one of the difficulties: Definitions. The performance standards require at least two "home visits" per year, but do not clearly define what is considered a "home visit". When we began to try to count home visits, lesson plans, referrals, and assessments, we discovered that everyone was counting something different. A home visit in one center was a least a thirty-minute visit in which the teacher sat in the parent's home and discussed

ways of better working with the child. In another, it was a short conference at the parent's job site, and in a third, it was just "driving by the parent's house, not seeing a car, and going home". Discussions with other Head Start program consultants and various H.H.S. personnel served to reconfirm the local experience. Definitions vary and they vary widely.

Obviously, a set of definitions and clearly defined guidelines for what to count were needed.

It took slightly over a year and several revisions, but such a manual was finally completed. Where possible, the best available general instructions and definitions were used. However, since opinions vary so widely, many of the "Austin" definitions may be applied only to Austin, and even those are subject to change.

For the sake of local comparability, definitions of a good lesson plan, a good home visit, a referral, a parent group meeting, do exist.

Our sharing the same definitions ("good" or "bad" as they may be) has been of immeasurable benefit in conducting evaluations, solving disagreements, allocating resources, and just generally communicating with one another.

Having explicit definitions and priorities and job descriptions, however, made it very clear that staff could not be held totally responsible for meeting all the standards. Parents and staff, alike, had always given lip service to the "team approach", but when no one showed up at a meeting, the "team" members would usually begin to blame one another.

With staff tasks so clearly outlined

and evaluated, it could easily be determined whether or not the staff member had done his or her part. As mentioned earlier, some staff began to feel that parents were not being held equally accountable. As a result of a series of very frank discussions, the P.P.C. decided to develop job descriptions for all parents; job descriptions and evaluations for all officers of the P.P.C.; and a special committee made up of 50% staff and 50% parents.

The "Staff/Parent Relations Committee" serves as a buffer for both the Head Start director and the chairperson of the P.P.C., studying staff complaints about parents or parent complaints about staff who might not be fulfilling their job descriptions.

As a further check to ensure that performance standards are met, the officers of the P.P.C. monitor themselves via the evaluation forms, which they complete on one another.

The simple recitation of the plan, the difficulties, and the way they were overcome gives the unrealistic impression that implementation was a smooth process. It was not!

No matter how it is approached, clearly defining tasks and holding people accountable for them is threatening; the more insecure the person feels, the greater the threat, and the greater the threat, the greater the reaction. Even with all the in-service training provided by Head Start, there are still many who feel threatened by having their personal evaluations so closely tied with the standards on which the program is evaluated.

Although the move toward greater accountability was a slow process (over a four-year period), and care was taken to

build in support for those who felt overly threatened, these safeguards did not always work. From time to time, both staff members and parents found the process uncomfortable.

Tasks left undone could no longer be ignored. Supervisors had to hold someone accountable or take the responsibility themselves, both unpleasant alternatives.

Some chose to allow the work to go undone and "adjust" the reports. Taking disciplinary action against supervisors who knowingly allowed false information to be reported was one of the most difficult and traumatic parts of the transaction.

Despite such traumas, the program now seems much stronger. Performance standards and goals are being achieved and documented. There remains healthy dialogue over various parts of the plan, and as a result of this dialogue, the plan is continually being improved.

THE DANGERS

One of the major dangers to any system which is the least bit successful is that "success" breeds "complacency", the sense that "it's done, now we can rest".

However, "resting" can be the downfall of the system. As with the example of the traumatic incident where figures were being falsified, the director of a large agency can become too reliant on "the reports". While they are necessary for a large agency, they must be frequently verified by the director's own observations.

More subtle, but equal, dangers lie in the Head Start director thinking that this, or any other plan, is the "only way". It is an easy trap to fall into and severely limits the director's ability to explore different approaches which might work even better. Therefore, formulators of the "Austin Plan" solicit questions, tips, plants suggestions, discussions, and criticism.

The Austin Plan is constantly being refined and, though parts of it are working well, the agency's group membership in the "Excedrin Anonymous" has not yet been cancelled.

SPECIAL NEEDS SESSION

Wanda Smith
Head Start Director
Kathy White
Handicap Service Coordinator
Dallas County Community Action Committee

PROBLEM

Although the presence of children with mulitiple handicaps is common within the Dallas County Head Start centers, one center was noted as having a significantly greater percentage of multiple handicapped children. An examination of our personnel records showed us that this same center experienced a proportionately higher rate of staff turnover and staff absence than many of our other Head Start centers. Personal visits to the center, also, indicated that the teachers in this center were experiencing extremely high levels of stress.

As soon as these problems were discovered, training on individual handicapping conditions were conducted, Individual Educational Plans were done, and home visits and parent conferences were conducted. Unfortunately, these measures were not enough to remedy our problem.

NEED

We determined that handicapped child-

ren with such a large variety of special needs at a deficient level needed consistent follow-up, either individually or in small groups. We, also, found that the children that had been tested and diagnosed as having emotional disturbance were causing multi-faceted problems within this open classroom.

It was obvious that these multiple handicapped children had problems that were different and that they needed consistant attention on an individual basis. However, once these multiple handicapped children began receiving the individual attention that they needed, many of their peers began emulating their behavior and the classroom was in bedlam. Over half of the 60 children enrolled in the center began exhibiting various behavioral problems as a result of the sixteen that had been diagnosed and intervention started. Obviously, the teachers showed more anxiety and began expressing a greater desire to be able to work more effectively with all of the children enrolled.

As the support staff assigned to the center, we recognized that most of our time was being spent as role models and that we were not spending enough time addressing the causes of the center's problems, nor were we spending enough time at our other assigned locations. We soon realized that the center staff had developed a dependence on us and that they were not willing to make independent judgements on any situation.

HOW MODEL DEVELOPED

Through discussion involving the Handicapped Coordinator, the Center Director, Education Coordinator, and Social Service Coordinator, it was determined that the center had to become innovative in its approach to the problem if the center was to be a place that "good" educational experiences happened for children. As a result of the problem, it was, also, discovered that parent participation in the classroom was down drastically. After many hours of brainstorming, it was decided by the group that a greater effort would have to be made focusing on each child's individual needs. The need for each component to share all information gathered on each child and his/her family, as well as the teacher's observations and, then, conducting a dialogue with all concerned was to be underscored. A plan of action would, then, be established and implemented to help each child. This process was termed a Special Needs Session.

HOW IT WORKS

Children are determined appropriate for the Special Needs Session when they have been diagnosed as having one or more handicapping conditions that cannot, at first, be effectively managed in a group of children in a regular Head Start classroom. Priority is given to children who have demonstrated behavioral problems in the classroom and who have been identified as needing a more behaviorally structured one-to-one environment.

The first step in the implementation of this process is the staffing of each child. The staffing includes the teacher, teacher assistant, Nutritionist, Social Service/Parent Involvement Coordinator, Handicap Coordinator, Education Coordinator, Health Coordinator or Health Aide, and Center Director. Each child's history and test results are discussed as well as other pertinent information related to the problem. A decision is made by the group at that time as to what children will be placed in the Special Needs Session. Home visits are scheduled with the parents so that their input can become a part of the plan. This is all in addition to the Individual Education Plan and the work the parents do at home.

The children are seen individually or, when more effective, in groups of two or three for approximately ten minute periods. Activities are planned prior to sessions and include development in speech, language skills, visual, auditory perception skills, fine motor skills and affective behavior. A classroom teacher is designated to work with the handicap coordinator in the sessions and will eventually assume responsibility of facilitating the sessions and training the other teachers. Each child's progress is recorded each time he attends a session and when it is felt he is doing well enough to discontinue, a meeting is held and he is dropped from the SNS list. If a child shows little or no progess, a special staffing is held with professional consultants and other staff members that are involved in the process to determine what other services may be necessary.

RESULTS OF THE MODEL

Four of the main results of this model are:

1. Cost Effectiveness - It eliminates the cost of going outside of the program and duplicating services that can be provided by Head Start Personnel.

2. Better Organized Program - Conferring and planning with Head Start staff, parents and appropriate professionals and/or agencies that work with handicapped children has led to an enhancement of knowledge and better communication skills of all involved. It has provided a structured system by which a child receives full benefit from our program.

3. Reduction of Staff Problems - The reduction of staff stress, high turnover, and absence rate has been great. Staff has acquired the necessary tools to deal effectively with the problems and are not trying to avoid dealing with them.

4. Increased Parent Participation - Parents understand and are able to better cope with handicapping conditions since behavioral problems have become manageable. They do not hesitate to come to the center and volunteer on a regularly scheduled basis.

CASE HISTORY

How It Really Works- The Case Study of Eddie Galvan

August 29, 1979

Eighteen month old Eddie Galvan (not his real name) was admitted to Children's Medical Center by his mother after having a seizure. Mrs. Galvan reported that during Eddie's seizure his eyes rolled back, he slobbered, and his body went limp for about five minutes. She reported that Eddie had a history of seizures and had previously been given phenobarbital to control them. An EEG was scheduled and his medication was resumed. Microcephaly was also diagnosed, and a return visit was scheduled for follow-up.

August 24, 1981

Thirty month old Eddie was referred to the Special Needs Session and pre-staffed. He was identified as having a serious wetting problem as well as speech and language delays. A parent conference was conducted the same day in which the results of the Special Needs Session were discussed with Eddie's parents. As a result of the pre-staffing and the parent conference a plan for toilet training Eddie was established.

August 25, 1981

A Physical examination was performed at Children's Medical Center by Dr. Porter. The results indicated that Eddie was in no distress, and there were not other apparent medical reasons for the frequent wetting. A urinalysis was also done, the results were negative.

Potty-Training

We decided that Potty training should take place in an area that was isolated from other activities with few or no distractions. We chose a reinforcer that we knew was valued by Eddie and were confident that he would be willing to "work" for it. Other criteria that was established for the training was that the trainer would be firm and consistent, a charting system would be maintained both at home and in the center, and that baseline information would be compiled on Eddie's weting behaviors prior to the beginning of the training.

Procedure

(The following general instructions were developed for toilet training all children and were used without modification in Eddie's training).

The child is shown where and what to do when he needs to urinate. During the potty training period activities should be planned for the child between the intervals that he goes to the bathroom. (i.e. table games, story books, etc.) The timer is set for 30 minutes, and the child is to be given juice every 5 minutes. He is reminded of dry pants (every 15 minutes). When trainer asks, "Are your pants dry?", trainer then reinforces dry pants with a chip, pretzel piece, or other salty edible reward. This reinforcer should be paired with verbal praise and social stroking. Also, the child is prompted to feel his "dry" pants. After timer goes off, the child is taken to the bathroom and told

(in terms familiar to him) to urinate in the toilet. If he urinates in the toilet, trainer overwhelms the child with verbal praise indicating approval. If child wets his pants, have him to change his clothing himself, giving no attention or assistance at all. Repeat this procedure all day for three consecutive days.

(Follow-Up)

Teachers are to continue program procedure with the exception of the feeding of juices and edible rewards. Gradually increase the time to be taken to the bathroom thirty minutes to forty-five minutes to one hour, etc. Chart information where indicated.

Daily Notes on Eddie's Training

Eddie, his teacher, and his mother began the potty-training program in an area isolated from other activities and with as few distractions as possible.

10:00 a.m.-- His teacher felt his pants and said to him "Your pants are dry", "Good".

10:05 a.m.-- He was checked for dry pants and reinforced for having "dry" pants with small portion of saltine cracker. He was then given another cup of juice.

10:15 a.m.-- Eddie was asked if he needed to go to the bathroom. He responded by nodding "yes". He was taken to the bathroom where he urinated in the toilet. He was reinforced for "peeing in the toilet". Eddie experienced some difficulty getting

his underpants down, and he did get them a little wet. His underpants were changed so that he would be able to clearly discriminate between "wet" and "dry".

10:26 a.m.-- Eddie was checked for dry pants with physical and verbal prompts. His pants were dry and Eddie was reinforced with a saltine and verbal praise.

10:28 a.m.-- Eddie got up and (it appeared) communicated, with gestures, the need to go to the bathroom. He was taken to the bathroom where he urinated in the toilet. He was reinforced with hugs and verbal praise.

10:42 a.m.-- His teacher checked him for dry pants and he was reinforced.

10:55 a.m.-- He was checked for dry pants and reinforced.

11:02 a.m.-- Eddie was asked if he needed to use the bathroom. He responded by nodding "yes". His teacher verbally modeled "bathroom" and asked him to repeat the word. He responded appropriately.

11:11 a.m.-- He was checked for dry pants and reinforced.

11:14 a.m.-- The follow-up at home was reviewed and the written procedure was provided to his mother.

The next day his mother came in and began the potty-training procedure with Eddie in an isolated area alone. The Handicap Coordinator provided the necessary materials and briefly reviewed the procedure, time, etc. and proceeded to assist with other screenings. Eddie's mother documented that he went to the bathroom at

9:45 a.m., urinated and was prompted to flush the toilet and wash his hands when he finished.

10:13 a.m.-- He was again taken to the bathroom by his mother, urinated and followed the routine procedure.

10:33 a.m.-- The teacher intervened and asked Eddie if he needed to go to the bathroom. He nodded "yes" and he urinated in the toilet and was reinforced with praise and social stroking. When they returned to the area, Eddie began exhibiting behaviors unacceptable (i.e. running, climbing on furniture, refusing to comply, etc.) and his mother was asked to go out of the area for awhile so that the teacher could attempt to gain control. When his mother was completely out of visual contact, Eddie began to scream for her. The teacher explained to him that when he complied (show me dry pants) that he would be with his mother. He responded "no" and attempted to run away. He was physically restrained with his back to the teacher (no eye-contact and as little physical contact as needed to prevent him from running away). He continued to scream, and attempted to bite the teacher on several occasions. At the scheduled ten minute intervals, he was physically made to touch his pants as the teacher said "dry pants".

10:50 a.m.-- He was again made to touch his pants as the teacher said "dry pants".

10:56 a.m.-- Eddie had to get up and clean his face. The teacher took his hand as if they were leaving the area, stopped and asked him to show her "dry pants". He

responded appropriately by touching his pants and repeated "dry pants" for which he was reinforced with praise. They began t o walk again and then stopped and repeated the procedure. He again responded appropriately and was given positive reinforcement. They walked to the bathroom where he urinated in the toilet and was heavily reinforced. After returning from the bathroom the teacher reviewed with Eddie's mother what had gone on and informed her that she should not come in the next day until she came to pick him up at the end of the day.

Procedure for Eliminating Soiling Behavior

(The following instructions were given to the teachers in the center for helping Eddie complete his toilet training.)

After Eddie finishes breakfast, take him to the bathroom and have him sit on the toilet (or potty chair) for approximately five minutes (after you have explained to him why he is there). The teacher should reinforce him for eliminating in the toilet with verbal praise and physical contact. If Eddie does not have a bowel movement during this time, allow him to get up and return to center activities. Continue to remind him at fifteen minute intervals (from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m.). At 9:00 a.m. take him to the bathroom repeating the above procedure.

If Eddie has a bowel movement on himself, the floor, etc., simply tell him, "Eddie, go and change your clothes". A teacher should accompany him to the bathroom with his change of clothing and a bag for the soiled ones. The teacher should stand outside the bathroom door with her

back to him, communicating with him only when it is absolutely necessary. He should not be assisted in cleaning or changing himself, except for tying his shoes.

If he soils a particular area or object, give him the cleaning aid and direct him to "clean the chair". After Eddie completes the clean-up, he should be made to return the cleaning aid(s) to the appropriate place.

The lack of reinforcement from the staff members, and having to clean up himself and the area soiled, should be very unpleasant for him. Therefore, time-out is not necessary.

The teacher should take Eddie to the bathroom after lunch, also.

The effectiveness of this training should be reviewed after one week.

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NETWORKING NOW

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INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS A CONSULTANT

Do you remember the first time you ever heard the word "consultant"? It was probably one of the "introductions" used to acquaint you with Head Start and it was more than likely preceded by, "workshop, conference or Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA)".

Funk and Wagnall define consultant as "the interchange of counsel, advice or information; to have regard to as interest or duty". By Head Start standards, consultant would probably best be defined in terms of those few, carefully chosen individuals, who you encounter at training sessions of all scopes, from local workshops to national conventions, which can easily be identified by ribbons, (usually blue) streaming from name tags, that proclaim SPEAKER. If you have ever been involved in the selection process of consultants, you probably have first hand experience on the trials and tribulations of such endeavors.

OVERVIEW: THE PROBLEM AND THE SOLUTION

Serving a total population of 1,292 Head Start families and staff, with individual and diverse needs, called for some type of methodology to be used in the selection process of T/TA consultants. El Paso is a large metropolis of approximately 450,000 people. Hence, resources are plentiful. The exact problem was identifying those resources and their areas of expertise from which Head Start families would benefit. Once the problem was defined, the exact methodology to be used, was revealed.

In the area of Social Service delivery of the El Paso program, an informal information and referral system had been constructed. This system provided a cross reference type of index, where needs and corresponding resources were identified. Since this system already identified resources, the question arose as to how it could be extended into the areas of finding and utilizing consultants for Head Start families and staff. More importantly, how could this be done at minimal or no cost to Head Start. The answer was simple. With continued use of the basic information and referral set-up, consultants and their areas of expertise were pinpointed.

THE INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SYSTEM

Basically, this information and referral system consists of a tapestry of

community resource directories, divided and categorized into five basic "human need" areas of self-fulfillment, egotistic, social, safety and physiological; as defined by Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Each resource is then further identified by related data, such a qualification requirements, related services, etc. The actual process of setting up an information and referral system is an on-going time consuming effort. But once the bulk of the cataloguing is completed, the benefits reaped are well worth it.

In adjusting the system for consultant service, the process of identifying related data was the "absolute." Once a resource was categorized under a basic need, the task remained to identify the resources of expertise in a specialty area, within the resource. Thus emerged the concept of networking.

NETWORKING: THE WHATS AND HOWS

A network is a system of elements (as lines of channels) that cross in the manner of the threads in a net to make it whole and workable. Evolved from this, Networkingk then, is a process or system of working with existing communities and their agencies or programs to insure maximum service delivery to Head Start families.

In order to use Networking for consultant selection, three basic steps were followed: rapport, program knowledge and follow-up. (See Networking wheel)

Initially rapport was established by

NETWORKING WHEEL

designating a contact person. At first there was no special method for doing this. For some resources, it was a mater of a phone call and establishing a good rapport with the person who answered, be they a secretary, staff person, or agency director. Other resources required an on-site visit where both information and program handouts could be exchanged. This latter technique, proved to be most effective, as more information could be shared, on a more personal level. Not only did this on-site visit provide good, solid program information, it afforded an opportunity to share stories about "program people", anything from high school adversaries to birthdates and zodiac signs. Thus was born the "Comadre Theory". Although it has no English translation per se, a "comadre" is the Spanish term for the relationship created between a child's mother and god mother, thus explicitly implying the possible strength of the rapport established.

Reflecting on step one usually revealed step two, for the most part completed. The responsibility to gather and learn data about the resource fell highly on the Head Start representative. In doing so, all areas of expertise within that resource could be discovered, noted, and tapped for future use. Equally as important, expecially in Networking for consultants, was the information given to the source on Head Start. It was found that when time came to utilize a resource consultant, the more they knew about Head Start and its functions, the more effective the training proved to be.

Finally, step three completed the process with some type of follow-up. This

basically consisted of inkind documentation or payment issuance as necessary, copies of all T/TA evaluations and a thank-you letter, thus serving both Head Start and the resource with required documentation. Also, and probably most importantly, this final step, allotted Head Start the opportunity to remind the resource of accessibility to them in any way Head Start could help their efforts in service delivery. Thus, the process was completed.

TRAINING TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

A basic for networking lies in the fundamental philosophy that for staff liaisons from any organizations to be successful and effective in networking, these same staff members must be equipped with the basic tools necessary for effective public relations. Training for networking is therefore a necessary ingredient in the process and the El Paso County program has designed and operated the following program:

1. Verbal Skills and Negotiations Techniques/Strategies

Component Coordinators and Center Directors are given training sessions on public speaking. Role playing sessions are video taped for reviewing and critiquing. Fact sheets are drawn up giving historical, statistical and current data on the program. Each staff person receives copies of these fact sheets and becomes articulate on the characteristics of the program. Reports

on the longitudinal studies of the effects of quality pre-school programs are summarized, and distributed to staff members for additional selling data.

A final touch of salesmanship training of staff, professional business cards are printed. For $25 for 1,000 business cards each staff member and Policy Council Representative receives his/her own professional business cards. The individual's names and titles are typed in with a clear elite type.

2. Parent Training

To monitor, assess, and document the parent training at both the center level and the County Policy Council level, a checklist has been devised. This checlist itemizes the topics for training the participants, the trainers, the timeline and most importantly the person responsible.

Month	Topic	Participants	Trainers	Person Responsible

The checklist at the individual centers or classrooms itemized such topics as "What is Head Start?" the "Child's Daily Schedule," etc. The entire center staff, (directors teachers, aides, cooks, social workers, nurses) all take part in the training and are listed under "Person Responsible" for certain topics. For specialized topics (i.e. parenting skills), professional consultant services are solicited at minimal or no cost.

Professionals in the mental health field are given the opportunity for exposure to the public. This is an advantage for the consultant to enhance his/her opportunities for clients through this exposure. This is also a credit to his/her personal record of services to the community.

Other professionals in other fields are requested as guests of honor or keynote speakers to various functions. These same persons are further exposed to the Head Start Program and it's needs. It is then that the selling of the program really begins. We have been fortunate enough to have services not solicited but offered! One example is the securing of our health services (physical examinations) from pediatricians at a lower rate than previously contracted. This was the result of utilizing these pediatricians in workshops as presenters and keynotespeakers while explaining the wonders of Head Start. We were very careful to publicly recognize them for their contributions.

3. College and University Training for Parents

The local community colleges and universities have staff who are familiar with and have worked with the Head Start CDA programs. These same staff and/or university students are requested and become a valuable resource for training. College students are often placed for part of their study in classroom settings.

The community college also receives imput from the Head Start Program, on workshop and training needs of the general community. We have been successful in the development and implementation of Saturday and

evening workshops and classes for our staff and parents. The Community College also picked up on a one year pilot project funded by the Educational Service Center for language and concept acquisition teaching. With the Head Start Program's initiation, encouragement, and endorsement, it was incorporated into the Community College curriculum under the Continuing Education Department and credit toward CDA certification was offered to all participants.

Other agencies (i.e. El Paso Women's Resource Center) collaborates with the Head Start Program for grant monies to conduct courses for women on parenting, employment resources, etc. The Social Service agency provides the staff trainers, the funding agency provides the financial resources and the Head Start program provides the participants.

4. Examples of Training Resources Used

Various social service agencies in the community have collaborated with the Head Start program in establishing a Speaker's Bureau. These agencies have assigned a liaison staff person to work with our parent groups in the presentation of information about the agency. Utilizing this method and again gaining more exposure and recognition for the individual agency has opened doors for their services at minimal or no cost to the program.

EXAMPLES OF CONSULTANT SERVICES AVAILABLE

	RESOURCE		SERVICES
1.	Fort Bliss Air Defense	-	Trainers and facilities for conference
2.	Texas Tech Academic Health Center	-	Trainers and Health Services
3.	Foster Grandparent Program	-	Volunteer Services
4.	RSVP (Retired Senior Citizens Volunteer Program)	-	Volunteer Services
5.	Educational Service Center	-	Trainers and Training
6.	El Paso Women's Resource Center	-	Trainers and Training

RESULTS:

The set-up of information and referral with modifications for finding consultants or Networking proved to work well and easily, It was found that with the on-going cataloquing and updates, resources were not only identified, but accumulating and changing constantly to meet the needs of our large Head Start population. Furthermore, once the inital ground work is laid, a resource can be utilized as many or as few times as chosen.

Networking serves a multipurpose function. Because of the on-going need for T/TA, without an effective system, such needs can expend a great deal of time and money. This system can meet those needs at little or no cost. It provides Head Start staff and families with a vast working knowledge of community resources and the people that make those resources work. Finally, when those same resources call upon Head Start to provide their population with T/TA services, it affords staff with professional growth and career development opportunities, a primary goal in project Head Start.

Networking is a notion conceived out of information and referral, which in turn is but a new name for a tried and true method for service delivery in all areas. Networking in Head Start is a process who's time has come. Social Service agencies, such as Head Start, are no longer a part of the "spend free sixties", for the eighties have brought on a wave of accountability. A process, as Networking, may at first appear to be time consuming, but proves to be a cost-effective and profitable method in time.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Head Start is but a part of a vast number of programs concerned with serving children and families. Agencies, such as these, co-exist with Head Start in communities throughout the United States all play vital roles in the development of the same target population. When Head Start joins forces, through the utilization of resources, services to children and families are

enhanced and mutual benefits are derived.

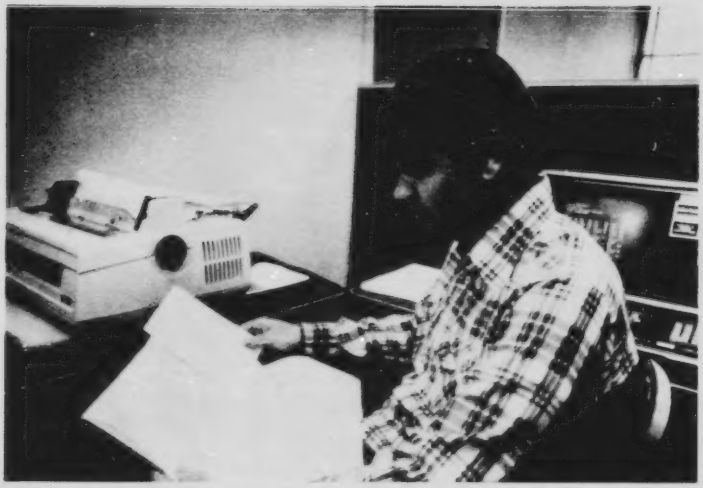
A great asset in using Networking in El paso is our urban setting. Many Head Start programs, however, are located in rural areas. In these cases, the need for Networking is twice fold. For use in a smaller program area a few changes would be suggested. Primarily, a rural program's accessibility to community resource directories may be non-existant. The problem would than appear to be in finding a source to provide primary information for building a referral and information system. The easiest solution would be to look in the area telephone book yellow pages. It provides a general categorization of agencies under services, as well as the basic preliminary information such as phone numbers and addresses.

Another area that may pose problems for rural programs, are limited resources. What may be surprising is the expandability and numberous areas of expertise within one resource alone. Also, when agency resources are limited, those resources identified through Networking, may be able to further identify for you other community resources previously unknown to your program, and so the Networking wheel rolls on.

CONCLUSION: NETWORKING NOW

The time has come for Head Start and others in service to children and families to unite in efforts. Head Start continues to grow and prosper in its seventeeth year, in spite of proposed program changes.

Accountability must now take a key role in the basic operation of Head Start. It is through systems such as Networking that both continuous growth and development can be insured for project Head Start.



HOW TO SURVIVE AN AUDIT

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Audits arouse feelings that run the gamut from reluctance to discomfort to stark fear. An old story about audits seems to illustrate this. The question is posed as to the two biggest lies in the world. The personnel of the agency to be audited at the entrance interview tell the auditor, "We are happy to have you here". The auditor then replies, "Thank you. I am very glad to be here".

Both parties are visualized as lying through their teeth. This undoubtedly is exaggerated, but it does illustrate that audits are seen as burdensome, intrusive, and even as unnecessary. Why are audits viewed in this manner when they have been conducted in Head Start since the inception of the program and are annual requirements that have to be complied with? The probable reason is that many persons are unfamiliar with the purpose of the conduct of audits or equate them with suspicion as if there is something dishonest going on.

The Day Care Association of Ft. Worth and Tarrant County has developed a framework for the conduct of audits that has enabled its personnel to look at them as constructive and essential management tools that are indispensible to program operation. The framework did not develop

overnight, but was the result of years of experience in dealing with audits. This article is an attempt to share the process developed by the Ft. Worth program, which will, hopefully, bring some perspective to the conduct of audits and to show that they need not be excruciatingly painful and, indeed, that they are helpful. This is written for Executive Directors of grantees, Head Start Directors, and other program personnel. It is from the Manager's viewpoint and is not intended to be a manual or guidelines for accountants or auditors, per se. It is intended to be helpful in planning, conducting, and resolving audits, as well as setting up systems and dealing with issues that come up when audits occur.

PURPOSE OF AUDITS

An audit's primary purpose is to verify what happens in a program in terms of numbers. As recipients of both federal and non-federal funds, grantees and their delegates, if any, are held accountable by their funding sources for verifying their projected, as well as actual, results. The back-up data or documentation of that program is carefully screened; also, financial documents of all types are checked to ensure that they are correct and that they represent the on-going activities. Personnel records are reviewed, as are property control measures.

Audits, also, allow for verification that expenditures are in line and consistent with the work program. Those who

are responsible for carrying out programs, such as Head Start, know that all funds expended must be for approved program purposes only. Funds may not be expended at the discretion of administrators, Board, or the Policy Council. Audits, therefore, assist in determining whether the expenditures that have been made are in line with the approved budget and work program as determined by the funding agent.

Another purpose of audits is the assistance that they provide to programs in helping them look at the entire system in place and, therefore, make a determination if their operating controls and procedures are sufficient and appropriate. This is a useful and constructive function and a popular one with program administrators. The design of the financial management system which ensures that budget management, control over operations and adequate documentation is tested during the conduct of audits. In addition, the design also tests the provision of accurate and complete disclosure of financial matters.

To say that all programs are examples of honest operations and functions, without a trace of deception, would be to stretch the truth. Audits do look for fraud and illegal practices and they do find them. Fortunately, the vast majority of Head Start programs are sound and follow good management practices so, in most instances, illegal doings do not enter into consideration.

Head Start programs have been federally mandated to conduct an annual audit. Without it, the program is subject to losing its funding. The federal government uses the conduct of audits as an accountability measure along with others, such as pre-

reviews and CMR (Consolidated Measurement and Review). Local programs, also, are helped by the annual audits, in that they are used as evaluative measures to judge the soundness of the agency; particularly, the fiscal part of it.

All program operations, including accounting, personnel management, or aspects of a programmatic nature such as the selection and purchase of materials and equipment, are enhanced by the auditing process. This, then, is the main purpose for conducting audits. The time when audits were looked upon only as evaluative measures of the accounting department have long passed and we now know that all agency operations, to a degree, are involved in the process. Audits are excellent tools for program administrators and they are indespensible to a good management system.

TYPES OF AUDITS

There are different types of audits that can be conducted and the type selected is dependent on the need that is to be fulfilled. Program administrators should be familiar with these so that they may request the one that they need. For Head Start purposes, there are three types of audits that can be conducted. These are as follows:

1. Internal Audits - These are audits that are conducted by program staff and are carried out to test the effectiveness of the internal control procedures that are in place. Internal audits are

sometimes conducted before independent and federal audits as a means of preparation or to determine the financial picture of the agency.

2. Independent Audits - These are audits conducted by Certified Public Accountants (CPAs) who represent private accounting firms. Independent audits can be conducted to ascertain the effectiveness of the accounting system in place, to audit the operation of programs such as Head Start, and/or to accomodate changes in local administration (i.e. the Executive Director).

3. Government Audits - These are audits conducted by federal auditors for specific programs such as:

1. Department of Health and Human Services.

2. United States Department of Agriculture.

PREPARATION FOR AUDIT

As in any other endeavor, preparations for the activity, whatever it happens to be, is the key to a successful outcome. This principle also holds true for conducting audits. The local program should have a planned timetable with projected dates listed for critical checkpoints. Checkpoints that should be covered are the program year end, selection of auditor, conduct of the audit, audit review procedures by staff and

the Board, and final submission of the completed audit to the required sources. Use of a system that plans for and carries out these functions as scheduled will assist programs in meeting audit deadlines and the auditing process will proceed smoother.

Selection of the auditing firm is another major task of the preparation process. Care must be taken to select an auditor or auditing firm that has no ties with the Head Start program to avoid any semblence of conflict of interest. The auditor must be a duly Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and be able to meet standards of independence. A discussion of auditing fees should take place and the process for determining the cost of the audit should be a part of the written agreement to be entered into between the parties involved. This agreement is termed a Letter of Engagement and it should be specific enough to let the auditors know what is expected of them. The auditors must be provided with an audit guide available from the funding source.

HOW TO GET A GOOD AUDIT

Good audits do not just happen, one must make them happen. It certainly helps if a good, smooth, and efficient operation is in place. Programs who have a system with rules and procedures clearly spelled out and with a staff that can implement them, are well on their way to conducting a good audit. Toward this end, the ser-

vices of an accounting consultant can assist the program managers and the Board, as well as the accounting staff in preparing for such a task. A consultant can outline procedures that are normally followed in the auditing process and this can, also, identify the "bookkeeping tasks" that can be done by staff so that the auditors do not spend an inordinate amount of time on this type of work. The consulant could, assist in providing guidance in the selections of the auditing firm by explaining what to look for and how to arrive at an equitable auditing fee.

Programs can help themselves in having a good audit by involving the Board in the auditing process. If the Board has an audit committee, it would be wise to keep them informed and involved in every stage of the audit. Using this strategy could result in facilitating the acceptance of the final audit report when it is presented to the Board.

Program managers can enhance the auditing effort by functioning as responsibly inquisitive individuals in the day-to-day operations of the programs. They can do this by asking questions of staff who are involved with any aspect of finance, whether it be purchasing, collecting, or accounting of funds. The questions that are asked should focus on the operating procedures to see if they are understood and followed and, also, to check if the internal controls in place are adequate. The managers should know the budget and work program, including the regulations and standards applicable to the program. The financial status of the program should be reviewed periodically in conjuction with random eval-

uation activities. Finally, have as much of the audit done by program personnel as possible. This saves time and the auditing fees are reduced accordingly.

Training program personnel and the Board who are involved in the auditing process is a good strategy that can assist in having a good audit. An explanation of roles and functions must be understood by all concerned and training sessions that are on-going will assist in this effort. Differentiating between policy-making and administrative function is helpful since many programs have had difficulties with their audits as a result of not knowing the difference between the two roles. Management workshops that cover these areas have been held regularly and programs must avail themselves of these opportunities.

CONDUCT OF THE AUDIT

When the formal audit starts, an entrance interview is strongly recommended. Key program personnel in addition to Board representation, especially the audit committee, should be in attendence. This meeting should be held in a relaxed but formal manner where the purpose and scope of the audit are explained. The process of conducting an entrance interview actually serves a double purpose. In addition to providing an explanation to those key people mentioned, the interview also prevents rumors from getting started, which most often do not have a base to them. The auditor should explain

the procedures that he is going to follow and have some idea as to the people he wants to talk to and he may even schedule some appointments. The local program personnel should made the auditor feel welcome to help set the tone for conducting the audit.

During the audit, program personnel needed by the auditor should be made available to the degree possible. Do keep in mind that the program personnel must still be able to carry on their work, so plan carefully to minimize any disruption in their work schedules. It is recommended that a staff person (usually the accountant) should act as a liaison between the auditor and the program staff in securing requested materials and in setting up appointments.

The auditor should schedule an exit interview with the same key personnel and Board members that attended the entrance interview. This interview is intended to be helpful and should be conducted in a polite but formal manner. The purpose of this meeting is to get a clear understanding of findings and implications, so questions are encouraged.

PROBLEMS WITH AUDITORS

Occasionally, local program personnel do get into problems with auditors and it is to the programs advantage to resolve these as soon as practically possible. When problem situations arise,

good faith should prevail as solutions are easier found when this kind of attitude exists. Many problems arise as a result of miscommunication and these can be solved easier if cool heads deal with them. There may exist genuine differences of opinion and these should be encouraged rather than discouraged. This is particularly true with guidelines that may be subject to individual interpretation.

When problems do occur, program personnel should have a clear understanding of what these are. The problem should be identified and then an analysis should be made to determine the best approach to follow in resolving it. If the problem identified by the auditor is a valid one, do give ground and accept it, but explain your rationale for it if one exists. If the auditor identifies an element of your program operation as a problem but you sincerely believe in it and can support it, do not give in without documenting and gathering supportive materials to back you. It may even be necessary to call in a third party to help resolve the issue.

AUDIT RESOLUTION

After the audit has been completed, accepted by the Board, and submitted to the funding agency, the findings and recommendations should be acted upon with deliberate speed. Programs normally have in place, as part of the auditing procedures, a timetable for the resolutions of audits and this should be followed.

In instances where a program needs assistance in this particular area, obtain assistance from the Head Start Training and Technical Assistance office. An accounting consultant can advise local program personnel as to how to proceed with these matters.

If the audit can not be reconciled by the prescribed timetable, an extension should be requested from the funding source with a revised time frame provided. Administrators and Board members should be aware that failure to respond to the required timetable established for the resolution of audit findings tends to magnify the problem. If problems exist because of disallowed expenditures, negotiate and ask for a payout over the long term. Remember that one's primary role at this stage is to minimize damage and prevent irreparable harm to the program which serves children and their families.

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY

Audits are not the terrible tasks that they are made out to be. They are positive and helpful tools that enhance the management process. They are not only program standards that have to be complied with, but they are a fact of life and it is best to deal with them in a realistic manner. In the conducting of program assessments or evaluations, they are indispensible. The auditing process will proceed that much smoother if you can prepare for it by having clearly defined guidelines and procedures that are followed. Audits are closed only

after the reconciliation process is completed, so the sooner acted upon, the better.

Do remember that an audit that finds your program "clean" and in proper order can be a most satisfying feeling and will enhance the administrator's credibility. This is a most psychologically satisfying and comforting thought.

A METRO HEAD START NON-DELEGATED PROGRAM

Ruth Marshall
Head Start Director
Gulf Coast Community Service Association

The Gulf Coast Community Service Association Head Start program (Houston) through 1978 was delegated to ten community groups. The result of this type of operation was that the program seemed to be going in ten different directions at the same time. While this was not necessarily bad in itself, the fact remained that several of the delegates were not meeting the minimum Head Start standards. This caused much aggravation and concern to the grantee because if any part of a program is determined to be out of compliance, then the total program is considered to be out of compliance. The validation of the Houston program in 1978 confirmed what the grantee administration had suspected, which was that the delegate agency structure, as it existed, did not lend itself to compliance.

DELEGATE AGENCY DIFFICULTIES

The delegate agency organizational structure of the Houston program was creating several problems to the grantee and the prime one seemed to be the inability if the Head Start administration at the grantee level to properly coordinate the program. Though the delegates were autonomous enti-

ties in their own right, cooperation and coordination were still necessary to a successful program. The grantee Head Start staff offered a variety of resources in the major components, such as education, social services, parent involvement, health, volunteers, and handicap services, but some of the delegates would not avail themselves of these services. The same was true of training opportunities that were planned and carried out by the grantee. Some of the delegates would not send their personnel to these training sessions and as a result, the effectiveness of the staff suffered.

Program administrators know that the key to operating a successful Head Start program rests with the ability to implement a management system which will facilitate the staff in carrying out its functions. The Houston program was having a most difficult time implementing its system because of the delegates inability or unwillingness to follow through. An example of this difficulty was the central administrative's office request for program information which was of a programmatic nature. There was a lack of response from some of the delegates, either because of inadequacies in their internal reporting systems or an absence of the management skills needed to fulfill their responsibilities. This had a negative impact on the reporting requirements of the grantee and the irregularity of the information flow affected all aspects of the program. A similar problem existed in the financial capabability of the delegates with some of them having very good systems while others were extremely weak. As a result, the financial reports were often inaccurate,

late, and at times, were not submitted at all.

Another serious problem that existed and which affected staff morale was the staffing patterns employed by the delegates. Some of these programs had coordinators for Head Start while other delegates did not. These disparities created friction between the delegates and the grantee as well as with themselves. Related to this problem was the touchy area of evaluation of personnel. Though the grantee did have a set standard for evaluating staff, the manner in which this was done differed among the delegates. Some of the delegates were very conscientious and did an excellent job. Others conducted their evaluations in a haphazard way and used untrained people in the process. This created uncertainty in the staff and caused disharmony.

All of these problems surfaced when the Validation Team visited the Houston program in 1978. The problems were not confined to the administration component either. They were spread out all over the entire program and they were serious enough that they were affecting the delivery of services to the children and their families. There were no easy solutions or recommendations, but it was clear that something had to be done to correct the problem.

GRANTEE OPERATED PROGRAM

After the Validation Team departed Houston, the grantee administration, the Head Start administration, and the Policy Council met to assess the situation. This planning group looked over all of the pro-

blem areas that had been identified and the recommendations made by the Team. It was decided by the group that in order to correct the deficiencies that had been noted, a new organizational structure was needed. Since the Validation Team has noted that the delegate agency arrangement used by the Houston program did not lend itself for compliance, the planning group decided to do away with it and have the grantee operate the program directly. This decision was not expected to be a popular one with the delegate agencies and it was expected that a lot of work would have to be done in order to sell the idea to the community groups, as well as to the Board. But the feeling of the planning group was that this action was needed to improve the overall quality of the program and it had to be taken.

The planning group felt that operating the program directly would be easier for the following reasons:

1. There would be one set of personnel policies that would apply to all staff. The evaluation of personnel would be conducted on a regular basis using the same procedures with the process being as standardized as much as possible.

2. The staffing pattern used for the centers would be based on the same criteria and based on the number of children served.

3. The information gathering and reporting procedures used would be the same for all the centers and the same timetable would be observed.

4. All financial accounting would be handled by the grantee using a standard format

for all fiscal systems. More accountability would be exerted in financial accounting, purchasing of materials, and equipment.

5. There would be closer supervision by the Head Start Director and the component heads to insure that the Head Start standards would be met and/or exceeded.

6. The areas identified by the Validation Team as weak or in need of improvement would be established as priorities and would be focused on and corrected.

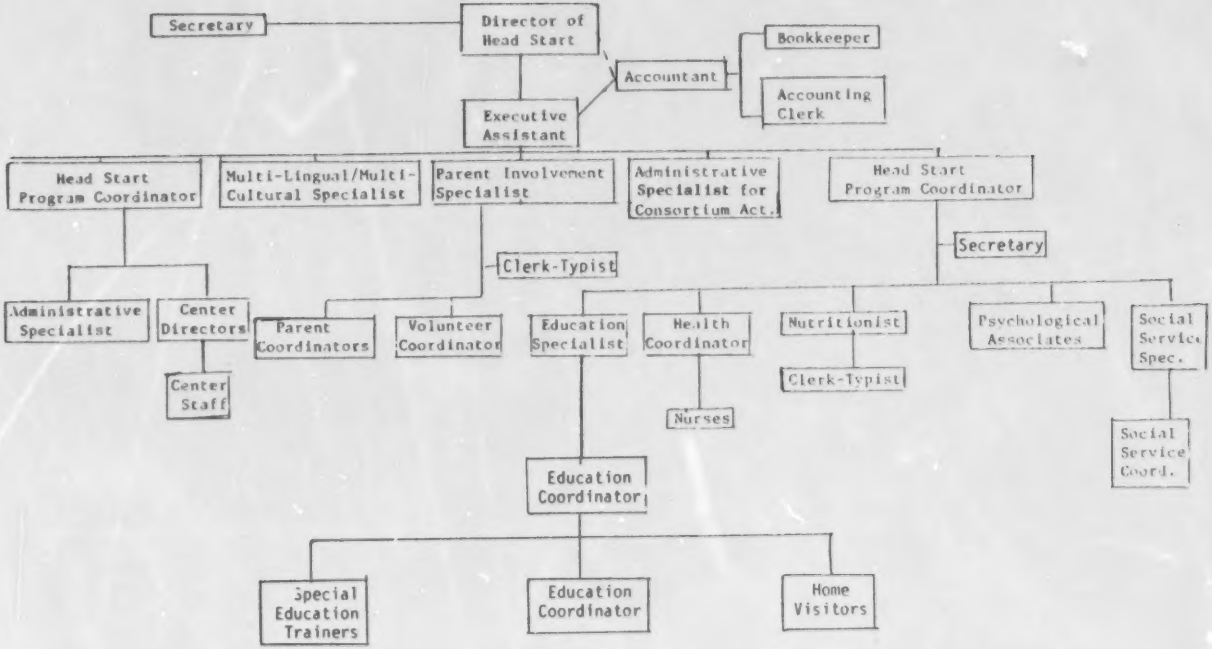
7. All training, both preservice and inservice, was to be planned and implemented by the Head Start Central Office and would become the first priority addressed.

IMPLEMENTING NEW STRUCTURE

The planning group's design of the new structure was a difficult task in itself, but implementation of that plan was much harder. The idea of losing delegate status disturbed the community groups to no end, but with constant efforts on the part of the Head Start management staff in explaining the reasoning behind the decision, the new structure was gradually accepted. The governing board also questioned the need for dropping the delegate structure but, after much discussion and deliberation, voted to accept the reorganization plan.

The Head Start management staff felt that the key ingredient that would make the new structure work would be a comprehensive training program that would be

HEAD START DEPARTMENT



planned for and involve all of the staff. Thus training became a high priority area and it became mandatory for all staff. The component heads were assigned the responsibility of developing specific plans on how to implement the training. This was done because earlier training had focused mostly on the content of the training and not enough on the "how to" of implementing the training, which was just as important. It was also decided that the content for the training sessions would be based on the results of a needs assessment that would be conducted periodically and on special initiatives that would be undertaken by the grantee from time to time. Training schedules were established with preservice planned for August, which would last for one week, and inservice which would be conducted for all staff a minimum of one day a month. Plans were made for the utilization of local staff to conduct as much of the training as possible and to utilize outside consultants whenever feasible.

Four types of training were identified as being most helpful in training the staff to function in the reorganized structure. There were as follows:

1. Preservice - This training would be for all staff and was to be undertaken during the month of August. The content for the workshop would focus on the staff's role and how and where they fit into the total organization. The training would last for one week and would also cover other areas identified in the need's assessment.

2. Administrator's Workshop - This train-

ing session would involve all component heads plus the director and assistant director as well as other administrators. It would be for one week and follow the preservice training session and emphasis would be given to agency administrative procedures. One day of this week's session would be devoted to parent involvement training with focus on the following areas:

A. Working with parents
B. How to treat parents
C. How to relate to parents
D. How to involve parents

3. Inservice Training - All staff would be involved in this type of training with a minimum of one day a month reserved for it. The emphasis for Inservice would be on content that would assist the staff in becoming more competent in their roles as determined by the need's assessment. Also, special initiatives undertaken by the grantee would be incorporated into the Inservice program.

4. External Training - Since there are a variety of other Head Start sources, such as Leadership Development Training, State Preservice, Regional and National Head Start Conferences, as well as other workships sponsored by Early Childhood Organizations, the Houston program would participate to the extent that training would complement the local training plans. The criteria for deciding whether to participate in external training would be based on the benefits that would be derived for the Houston program, staff time, and travel considerations.

An element that was added to the train-

ing design was the division of staff into training levels or tracks in order to make the training as relevant as possible. In this manner, training could be individualized to meet the needs of the staff and would also be more interesting and appealing. The training levels identified as being the most appropriate were:

1. The Teaching Team - This would include both teachers and aides.

2. The Nutrition Staff - Included here would be nutritionists, cooks, and cook assistants.

3. The Custodial Staff - Primarily custodians and maintenance personnel.

4. Social Services and Parent Involvement Team - Personnel who work in these two components.

5. The Administration Team - This would include component heads, center directors, and other administrators.

While the training that is conducted is geared to these five levels, there are some sessions in which more than one level is involved and that may be due to the nature of the training content itself. The levels then are flexible to accomodate these training needs though most of the training that is conducted occurs at the individual levels.

RESULTS OF NEW ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The Gulf Coast Community Head Start program has been operating directly under the grantee without delegates for over three years and it has been a successful experiment. The program has functioned much smoother without many of the previous problems associated with the old, delegated structure that was in operation up until 1978. As a matter of fact, during the conduct of the Consolidated Management Review (CMR) in the Fall of 1981, the Houston program fared much better than it did during the Validation visit of 1978. The CMR, which is a process established by the Administration for Children Youth and Families (ACYF) to monitor local program activity and to assist with local program development, fouid the Houston program to be in very good shape and in compliance with the standards. To a large degree, this was the result of the reorganizatoin of the program that took place.

Probably the area where the most improvement has been noted is in the area of staff development. The staff now understands the basis of how they will be evaluated. The criteria is clearly spelled out and the process is standardized so that all personnel are evaluated objectively. The staff operate under one set of personnel policies and are aware of what they need to do in order to be promoted. The salary schedule is consistent with the nature of the position held as well as with the experience level. The staff is also provided with equal consideration for training opportunities and this has resulted in a renewed interest and increased participation in all

types of training. All of these changes have led to a much improved staff morale, which has impacted favorably the quality of the total program.

The reorganization of the agency has also reduced administrative costs. The previously delegated program approach, using the ten community groups as operators of the program, had too many layers of administration. The reorganized structure calls for the same central administrative unit to operate all aspects of the program that existed previously, but the other previous administrators have become center directors or direct service providers rather than coordinators or other administrators. This has made for a more cost effective operation.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO OTHER GRANTEES

The grantee operated program model developed by the Gulf Coast Community Organization is a good one for Houston. This approach may also be a good model for other Metros to emulate since it works well in large urban settings. The metro nondelegated Head Start program is effective because:

1. Program managers know exactly what is going on.

2. Information of all types is readily available.

3. Response time for action that needs to be taken is shortened.

4. Priorities are more easily established.

A MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS APPROACH FOR HEAD START

Blanche Russ
Executive Director
Adelina Fritz
Head Start Director Parent-Child, Inc.

In order for a program operation to flow smoothly, it must have access to accurate, timely, and relevant information. Decisions which affect program recipients, staff, policymakers, and supportive social agencies are constantly being made, which are based on the information being provided. If this information is incorrect, late, or inappropriate, program operations will be hampered by it, and the result may be low staff morale, poor quality of services that are dispensed, and a management system in place which can not get the job done.

The Head Start program in San Antonio found itself in a predicament in 1979, after having changed program sponsors from a Community Action Agency to the present grantee. Program administrators at this time noted that information flowing into the program had gaps in it and was not continuous. They also discovered that the data submitted by the various Head Start centers did not substantiate the final reports that had been based on that information. Furthermore, it was found that the documentation provided to back up that data was also sporadic and not very reliable. This led the program director and component heads to conduct a thorough assessment of the entire information gath-

ering-reporting system. The assessment indicated basically that much of the information needed for the Head Start program was excluded and much of the information requested by the former sponsor was of little or no use for Head Start. The inadequacy of the system was confirmed also by a team of Federal officials that conducted an evaluation of the program and the idea for the development of the Management Information System (MIS) came into being.

MIS RATIONALE

With the operation of Project Head Start transferred to the new sponsor, Parent-Child Incorporated, a first priority was set and that was to develop the information gathering and reporting system. This would help solve the discrepancies that existed and improve the information flow which would hopefully make for a smoother functioning and cost effective operation. It also would help the new sponsor meet national, state, and local standards.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR MIS

Administrators felt that the basis for the developlment of the MIS should be on program goals and objectives. In this manner the new reporting system would identify and provide information as to the status of the primary purpose for the program. Other considerations for the

system were :

1. The Head Start standards were to be incorporated by using the SAVI (Self-Assessment Validation Instrument) as a guide since it listed all requirements and also provided specific guidance for assessing compliance.

2. The new system needed to provide information to program managers within sufficient time to allow them to react to problems before they became serious and got out of hand.

3. The system should identify program needs to enable the administrators to initiate new strategies in carrying out the dictates of the program.

4. The new system also had to lend itself to the conduct of internal and external assessments and evaluations, since these were to be done on a systematic and ongoing basis.

5. The last consideration for the design of the new system was to address the costs required for information gathering and reporting with all attempts made to minimize these with the ultimate goal of operating a sound cost-effective program.

The stage was then set for the final document that evolved and this system is now in use in the Parent-Child, Inc., program of San Antonio, Texas. While modifications of the MIS will continue to be made to accommodate changes in program goals and objectives, it is expected that this system will be in place for a long time since it meets the needs of the local program.

PARENT-CHILD, INCORPORATED

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MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS REPORT
(MIS)

Month _____ Year _____

PROGRAMS:

HEAD START [ ]

CITY FUNDED DAY CARE [ ]

TITLE XX DAY CARE [ ]

Prepared by: _____

Date Submitted: _____

_____ _____
Executive Director Date

DESCRIPTION OF THE MIS

The MIS is an information gathering/ reporting system made up of a series of forms designed to provide information to the grantee on an up-to-the moment basis. The system is a comprehensive one and addresses all of the Head Start components. Information collected from the MIS can be extracted quickly and efficiently to prepare required reports to the local, state, and Federal agencies needing the data. In addition, the information is used to inform the Board and the various parent groups. Program administrators, component heads, and center managers also find it indispensible for planning purposes and it also gives them a picture of what is going on. The following information is obtained through the MIS:

A. Enrollment and attendance reporting that occurs on a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly basis. Forms for this purpose are provided to individual classes, each center, listing name, funding source, sex, age, and ethnicity.

B. Center operations information that is reported on weekly and monthly and which addresses such areas as licensing capacity, funded slots, staffing for centers with emphasis on:

1. Number of staff
2. Staff vacancies
3. Ethnicity, sex, and time and attendance records.
4. Inservice training sessions including attendees.
5. Number of staff meetings and the agenda followed.

6. Type of centers, whether these are lead, satellite, or independent.
7. Funding source such as Head Start full day or part day, Title XX, or city funded.
8. Accidents, which includes the nature of the accident and how it happened.

C. The MIS also lists individual goals to to undertaken with accompanying objectives for each goal and also specifies the strategy to be followed in achieving the objective. The reporting for this type of information is done both in quantitative and narrative form. This information is required for each of the following components.

1. Education - Including child assessments, language profiles, progress reports/parent contacts, units being taught, field trips, and a description of the educational program.
2. Social Services - Includes home visits, referrals to and from other agencies, and a description of the Social Services Program.
3. Health Services - Includes number of physical and dental exams, immunizations, and health advisory committee meetings and a description of the health program.
4. Parent Involvement - Includes information on policy council, policy committee, center committee meetings. Also includes information on parent training and a description of the parent program.
5. Nutrition - Includes information on the numbers of lunches and breakfasts served, the number of meet-

ings the nutrition committee holds, and training sessions for parents and staff. Also a description of the nutrition program is provided.

6. Handicap - Includes number of children with types of handicapping conditions, children assessed and diagnosed, and the number of training sessions for parents and staff in addition to a description of the handicap program.

D. Visitor information - The MIS allows for the reporting of all visitors that go into the centers. This includes visits from central office staff, volunteers, and any others. The name of the visitor is listed, as is the reason for the visit.

E. Problems encountered with suggested solutions - A Unique aspect of the system requests the identification of problem areas with recommended solutions to those problems . This often results with the local centers solving their own problems without the need for involving central office staff.

TRAINING TO IMPLEMENT MIS

In order to make the Management Information Systems approach work, a rigorous training program has been designed and is implemented on a regularly scheduled basis. Since the system is a precise one, the center managers and the component heads have to have a clear understanding of it and be familiar with all aspects. The

failure of one person responsible for gathering the data and recording it in the appropriate manner can affect the results of the MIS. So for this reason training is paramount. Training for MIS is scheduled during pre-service with follow-up on a monthly basis. For those persons new to the system, one-to-one training is provided by the component heads.

There are four levels of training for the personnel in the Head Start program. These are:

1. Level one is for the component heads and the director who are primarily responsible for compiling the data, interpreting it, and making reports to the various agencies.

2. Level two is for the center managers who have primary responsibility for the data gathering process.

3. Level three is for teachers, aides, and social workers who have primary responsibility for data gathering.

4. Level four is for center staff. This includes all staff members that work at the center level and that are responsible for recording the data and compiling it in the required forms for submission to the central office.

The Head Start program operated by Parent/Child, Inc., from San Antonio has developed a series of training modules which have proven to be invaluable to the training process. The modules are introduced to the staff according to the level of training being conducted. The training is divided into sections with rather

specific procedures spelled out as to how it will be disseminated. The director of the program and the component heads are primarily responsible for the conduct of MIS training.

RESULTS OF THE MIS

The implementation of the Management Information System's approach to information gathering and reporting has proven to be an effective management tool for the Head Start program. Reports to funding agencies are submitted on time with the included information much improved and with documentation available for support. The center managers have taken on a new role in that they depend on themselves to get the necessary information and run the program. This in turn has provided them with increased self-confidence and has made them more responsible to the program. Also, the fact that the center managers now see the "total picture" and have access to the large pool of information, they now possess a better basis for decision-making which has improved their management skills.

The new system has been in place for awhile and the staff as a whole has accepted it. This can be seen in the much improved morale that they exhibit. Since a necessary ingredient to the successful operation of any endeavor is staff acceptance, hopefully this will result in a better program for the children and their families.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT: KEY TO PROGRAM OPERATION

Adela Guerrero
Head Start Director, Community Action Council of South Texas-Hidalgo County

Head Start is different! Unlike other federal programs that only recommend and encourage Parent Involvement, Head Start mandates it. As a result of requiring Parent Involvement and making it a Standard, Head Start has been and continues to be a most successful program. This can be attested to by various national evaluations that have been conducted. The Head Start program of the Community Action Council of South Texas-Hidalgo County enjoys a similar success and much of it is also due to the emphasis that has been placed on maintaining a very active Parent Involvement component.

Program administrators long ago decided that in order to effect lasting positive changes, the parents would have to learn communication, organizational, and decision-making skills and make these a part of their daily mode of functioning. The program has been in the process of implementing this particular goal and has made considerable progress towards it.

PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

The Community Action Council of South Texas-Hidalgo County program serves over 1400 children and their families. It covers an area that comprises the counties of Jim Hogg, Zapata, Starr, and Hidalgo; and includes both urban and rural settings. Unfortunately, the parents from this program have historically been excluded from mainstream activities because of their low-income status, language barriers, and limited educational levels. As a result of this non-involvement in community affairs, their communication skills were not developed in a sufficient manner to allow for the voicing and sharing of common concerns nor to undertaking activities that would be of benefit to their children and themselves.

The exclusion from participation in mainstream activities has also affected the learning of the organizational skills that parents need in order to come together in group settings to deliberate and act on matters of concern to the program. Such aspects as how groups are formed, their purpose, how business is conducted, and the influence that these groups generate were not fully understood and utilized. The lack of communication and organizational skills has, also, led to an inability to learn about the process of decision making, a skill very much needed in our society.

When the goal for providing parents with communicational, organizational, and decision-making skills was established, it was recognized that it would be difficult to achieve. However, the program managers felt that it was not only logical,

but necessary in order to operate a successful program that would meet the needs of the children and their families. Pursuing this goal would also ensure that there would be some continuity and follow-through after the children had left Head Start. The administrators set out to make this happen.

DESIGN FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT

The development of goals for any endeavor is usually an easy matter, but the manner in which they are carried out is probably the more difficult task. Such was the case with the design for implementing the skill development program. After much deliberation, it was decided that there would be a lot of emphasis placed on exposing parents to people, places, and things. This would take the form of inviting public officials, agency heads, professional consultants, and other key personnel to meet with the parents. The strategy would allow for identification with role models and learning what these people were all about.

Next, it was decided that parents would be encouraged to participate in meetings, workshops, and conferences at the local, state, regional, and national levels. Participation in these activities would provide them with an understanding of what happens at those levels and also give them an idea of what the total picture looks like. Exposure to places like Detroit, Los Angeles, Denver, Dallas, Austin, Houston, and other major cities where these functions take place would give the parents opportunities to develop an awareness that

would foster self-growth.

The third aspect of the skill development program dealt with "things" which were defined as activities that would be generated jointly by the parents and staff. Included here would be fund-raisers, volunteerism, socials, and other special functions. These activities would offer learning opportunities to enhance communication skills through group discussions, interactions with others, and the use of informative materials. The activities would also heighten awareness of how organizational skills are developed through such means as dividing tasks among the participants, establishing time schedules to achieve objectives, and by observing constructive projects come into being through the cooperation of all involved. Lastly, decision-making skills would be learned through the process of contributing and sharing ideas that would be decided upon by the whole group after active discussion and consideration had been provided.

The design for the skill development training program was not created by staff administration alone. Parents were active participants in its development and the Policy Council approved of its various aspects. The whole process took a lot of time since there was much discussion and some of the issues that arose were rather complex and at times divisive. However, the question of how to incorporate in the Parent Involvement program a process for developing the needed skills was answered. This would be accomplished through activities that would teach parents communicational, organizational, and decision-making skills.

THE EVENTS

King and Queen Contest

It was decided that an activity that would teach parents communicational, organizational, and decision-making skills and which would have positive side affects, such as involvement of the community was a fund-raiser. An activity of this type would also assist in raising funds that the parents themselves could use (eg. travel purposes). Program administrators reasoned that the proposed fund-raiser would do the following:

1. Provide parents with the opportunity to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the activity.

2. Assist parents in determining the manner to pursue the activity. Involved in this process would be a plan for organizing the event, spelling out roles for participants, and setting time schedules for the conduct of the activity.

3. Teach parents about the processes for decision-making by deciding such aspects involved as to who would participate, who would implement the project, when the activity would take place, and where it would be held.

The King and Queen contest involved all of the children in the program. Every classroom selected a King and a Queen candidate based on the highest number of votes cast. Each vote represented one penny which had been raised on behalf of the candidate through cake sales, dances, flea

markets, or through cannisters that had been set up in stores. The children that were selected as Classroom King and Queen then competed against one another in each center to determine the Center King and Queen. The winners were selected on the basis of those that had received the largest number of votes. Each center's King and Queen candidates then competed against one another and the highest vote getters were selected as the Head Start King and Queen.

This activity was an outstanding success in that the parents learned a lot about cooperation, communication, organization, and making decisions. It also served as a means of getting the community actively involved in Head Start. Secondarily, the parents raised close to $30,000 in this one function which was used to pay expenses for other activities such as travel for meetings, workshops, and conferences. The policy council and each of the centers shared in the proceeds.

Annual Field Day

The Community Action Council of South Texas-Hidalgo County program planned and conducted another activity that was very well received by the children, parents, staff, and community. It was such a success that the program administrators decided to make it an annual event. The activity is called The Annual Field Day and it has, as its objective, the meeting of all program children, parents, staff, and the community in a field setting where the children participate in the following events:

1. Foot racing
2. Sack racing
3. Tricycle race
4. Football throw
5. Obstacle course

Children compete according to their own age and sex with ribbons being awarded to the first four winners in each event. All children who participate are provided with "participant" ribbons to show that they have participated. This particular activity is designed to do the following for parents:

1. Parents participate in the planning of the event.

2. Parents help publicize the event by going on radio, notifying media, and appearing on television.

3. Parents assist in conducting the events by acting as judges, directing traffic, handing out the awards, and looking after the children.

By conducting this particular function, parents learn to communicate with people at various levels such as staff, newspapers, radio, public officials, and others. The planning phase offers parents opportunities to learn how to organize events, schedules, volunteers; and, how to deal with organizational problems. Parents function on committees such as transportation, public relations, food, clean-up, and program which provides them with an insight as to how committees function.

Parent-Volunteer Recognition Banquet

A third function which allows for skill development for parents is the Parent-Volunteer Recognition Banquet. This is also an annual event that allows for much parent input. The stated purpose for the activity is to honor and recognize those parents and volunteers wno have contributed to the program, but the secondary purpose is to help parents with their skill development.

The banquet helped the parents and provided them with many learning opportunities. Parents served on the planning committees and assisted the staff with decorations, menus, awards and certificates, site selection, as well as with the program. These experiences helped them to learn about planning, implementing, and evaluating activities.

Graduation Event

The final major activity of the Community Action Council of South Texas-Hidalgo County program is the Annual Mass Graduation that takes place in May. This has been a very successful function that is normally attended by a standing-room only crowd. Children from all the centers who are leaving Head Start and beginning their public school careers are awarded Head Start Diplomas before an audience that consists of their parents, other family members, and the community at large. Public officials, and other dignitaries are invited and the program usually gets a lot of publicity.

The success of this activity is again due to long and careful planning

that involves both staff and parents, Usually the planning phase begins during the month of September with the Policy Council approving the activity and committees are named to work in the various facets including publicity, decorations, transportation, program, location, and clean-up. During these committee planning sessions, parents learn to express their opinions as well as to listen to the opinions of others. They also have opportunities to look at how the various tasks are organized and how the whole activity "comes together" as a result of the careful planning and hard work that makes it happen. They also see and participate in the various decisions that have to be made regarding the conduct of the activity. This type of involvement is a most practical and sensible method of teaching parents skills that they use in everyday situations.

TRAINING TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

The execution and success of The Parent Involvement program that has been described is largely due to the training that has been designed and implemented. It is the feeling of the administration that training is the element that will provide both staff and parents with the skills that they need in order to function effectively in their respective roles. All training sessions underscore the importance and need of parents and staff working together. The local program administrators also involve outside consultants and the

Regional Training Officers both in plan- and conducting the training sessions. This has proven fruitful in finding and securing resources that are used in the various training sessions that are carried out in the individual centers, at local cluster sites, and at the total program level. Both staff and parents are encouraged to attend training sessions at state, regional, and national levels with the understanding that the information gained is to be brought back and shared with others. In this manner, other program staff and parents also profit from that training at little or no increase in costs.

RESULTS OF THE PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

While no formal evaluation of the Parent Involvement program has been conducted, program administrators and parents themselves are happy with the results. South Texas Head Start parents function in leadership roles in the State Parents Association, at regional meetings, and at the National level. Locally, they have undertaken advocacy roles on behalf of Head Start and other programs for children. Parents understand the function and operations of local organizations and agencies and work to incorporate these into their Head Start program. These activities on the part of parents show that they have learned communicational, organizational, and decision-making skills, and are making use of them.